



Wisconsin ARES/RACES

Credentialing of Communicators

General:

In order to voluntarily comply with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), Wisconsin Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) and Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) has created this standard for credentialing volunteer amateur radio communicators. NIMS Component III, Resource Management, describes the credentialing process and is attached as an appendix to this document.

The credentialing protocol for Wisconsin ARES/RACES volunteers considers several factors:

- **Education:** Coursework, usually spanning several classes, based on an established curriculum and presented by a school, college, or university. These courses provide a core base of knowledge and skills to perform the duties of a volunteer communicator.
- **Training:** Class work in a specific topic presented in a single meeting or small number of meetings that enhances or augments a volunteer communicator's understanding, proficiency and abilities.
- **Experience:** Performing the volunteer communicator function at events and incidents to attain and maintain proficiency in applying knowledge, skills, and abilities. Experience includes one time and recurring requirements.
- **Physical, Medical, and other Fitness Standards:** Physical and medical considerations that help ensure safe job performance in real world environments. Also considered is a member's trustworthiness to function where he or she may be exposed to sensitive information and/or high value equipment.
- **Certification:** Designation that an individual has met the requirements and achieved specific knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- **Licensing:** Legal designation that an individual has met the necessary legal requirements to function in a job title.

Application:

Within Wisconsin ARES/RACES, the credential status of each volunteer communicator will be reviewed each year or more frequently as necessary at the appropriate leadership level.

- Emergency coordinators (EC) review the credentials of their assistants and members of their teams.
- District emergency coordinators (DEC) review the credentials of their assistants and the emergency coordinators in their districts.
- The section emergency coordinator (SEC) and the RACES chief radio officer (CRO) review the credentials of their assistants and deputies and the district emergency coordinators.



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Each EC shall maintain a list of the volunteer communicators in their teams. This list shall indicate each member's credential status and shall serve as the EC's certification of each team member. Lists shall be shared with the DEC, the SEC, and the CRO who shall each maintain and share a similar list of their assistants and deputies and shall certify their assistant's and deputy's credential status. A compiled list of all Wisconsin ARES/RACES volunteer communicators shall be provided to the Wisconsin Emergency Management Communications Officer at least once each calendar year or more frequently as required.

Each credentialed ARES/RACES volunteer communicator should be provided with an ID card or tag attesting to their credential status. In some counties, this credential may be a county issued card. In counties that do not provide a credential, volunteer communicators should be provided with a Wisconsin ARES/RACES ID card. In any instance where a member's credential is expired or revoked, the ID card or other credential shall be returned.

When ARES/RACES is activated for an event or incident where ARES/RACES human resources are needed, leadership at the appropriate level should prepare an Incident Action Plan (IAP). There are stand-alone ICS forms and multiple tools including the IAP Workbook and the Wisconsin ARES/RACES Generic Activation Plan to assist with creating an IAP.

Revocation:

If, at any time, a credentialed volunteer communicator's education, training, experience, physical, medical, or other fitness standard including a background check is found not to meet these credentialing standards, his/her credential shall be revoked. In case of revocation, any credential documents, including identification card(s), shall be returned and his/her name shall be removed from the list of credentialed volunteer communicators within 18 hours. A volunteer communicator whose credential has been revoked may apply for reinstatement when he/she meets these credentialing standards.

Credentialing standards for Wisconsin ARES/RACES:

The next several pages contain charts that detail how ARES/RACES volunteer communicators are credentialed. In order to be credentialed at a certain level, the volunteer communicator must meet all listed requirements.



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Resource:		ARES/RACES EmComm Volunteer				
Category:		ESF-2 (Communications)		Kind:	Human Resource	
Minimum Capabilities		Communicator I	Communicator II	Communicator III	Communicator IV	Other
Component	Metric	Executive Leadership (SEC, CRO)	Senior Leadership (DEC, ASEC, Deputy CRO)	Leadership Position (EC, ADEC)	Volunteer Communicator	Interim Volunteer Communicator
Description:		<p>The primary duty of a volunteer communicator is to assist served agencies by passing messages via two way radio. Volunteer communicators operate radio transmitters and receivers on various properly licensed HF, VHF, UHF, and SHF frequencies in various modes including voice and digital modes in support of incidents and events where the incident command system is in use. Volunteer communicators should also be proficient in operation of computers, navigating the internet, and Microsoft Office applications especially Word and Excel.</p> <p>Volunteer communicators may operate from home stations; from emergency scenes out of doors or in large or small vehicles; from communications centers and/or emergency operations centers; from bare-bones expedient communications or operations centers and from other locations as dictated by the incident or event.</p> <p>Volunteer communicators may perform their duties in austere conditions and in all weather conditions which may include extremes of heat, cold, and precipitation with minimal protection against sunlight, rain, snow, wind, and temperatures. In addition operation may require extended periods of standing or walking in all environmental conditions.</p>				



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Education	Certificate of Completion	Same as Communicator II plus, An advanced level course of study in emergency communications	Same as Communicator III plus, An intermediate level course of study in emergency communications	Successful completion of ARRL Introduction to Emergency Communications or an equivalent course of study in emergency communications		
Training (one time)	Certificate of Completion	Same as Communicator II plus, IS-400: Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff	Same as Communicator III plus, IS-800b: Intro to National Response Framework and, IS-300: Intermediate ICS for	Same as Communicator IV plus, IS-200b: ICS for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents	FEMA IS-700: Intro to NIMS and, FEMA IS-100b: Intro to the Incident Command System	



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			Expanding Incidents			
Training (reoccurring)	Sponsoring Organization Certification	Attends SkyWarn observer training conducted by the National Weather Service at least biannually.				
Experience, One Time	Supervisor’s Certification					
Experience, Recurring	Supervisor’s Certification	Participation in a leadership role in at least one event or incident in which Wisconsin ARES/RACES is formally involved each calendar year.		Participation in at least one event or incident in which Wisconsin ARES/RACES is formally involved each calendar year.		
	Sponsoring Organization Certification	Attends at least one formal meeting of a Wisconsin ARES/RACES group where a training program is conducted each calendar year.				



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	Self Certification	Participates in at least one formal ARES/RACES net each calendar year.				
	Self Certification	Sends at least one written message in ARRL Radiogram format each calendar year.				
Physical, Medical, Other Fitness	Supervisor's Certification	Medically able to participate in an incident or event which may exceed a single operational period in which ARES/RACES is formally involved. Successfully passes a periodic and/or on-demand background investigation. A criminal history may be cause for rejection for or revocation of a volunteer communicator's credential.				
Licensing	Proof of Licensure	A current and unrestricted amateur radio license issued by the Federal Communications Commission at the Technician level or above.				
Comments:	In order to hold any ARES/RACES EmComm Volunteer credential, all requirements of that credentialing level must be met. The term “digital modes” includes CW, packet, WinLink, D-Star, and other modes which communicate by means other than voice.					



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		<p>The term "equivalent course of study" means a course of study acceptable to the SEC and ASEC, Training.</p> <p>The term "incident" means an emergency operation where an ARES/RACES organization is activated by a recognized served agency to provide communications services.</p> <p>The term "event" means a non-emergency operation where an ARES/RACES organization participates at the request of the event sponsoring agency to provide communications services.</p>				



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Appendix: NIMS Credentialing

Credentialing

The credentialing process entails the objective evaluation and documentation of an individual's current certification, license, or degree; training and experience; and competence or proficiency to meet nationally accepted standards, provide particular services and/or functions, or perform specific tasks under specific conditions during an incident.

For the purpose of NIMS, credentialing is the administrative process for validating personnel qualifications and providing authorization to perform specific functions and to have specific access to an incident involving mutual aid.

Figure 3 illustrates the following NIC-recommended process for credentialing under NIMS:

When a request for mutual aid is received, the potential supporting department or agency evaluates its capacity to accommodate the anticipated loss of the resources that would be deployed without compromising mission performance (e.g., can a fire department allow 20 percent of its equipment and personnel to be deployed to another jurisdiction for 30 days and still meet its own community's needs?).

If the potential supporting department or agency determines that it can accommodate the requested deployment of resources, it must next identify specific personnel who will be deployed. The department or agency then submits applications for each member selected for deployment to an authorized accrediting agency identified by the credentialing authority of the State to which the mutual aid will be provided.

The accrediting agency evaluates each application and determines whether the applicant meets the established criteria for the positions required by the mission. Applications that the authorized accrediting agency determines fail to meet established criteria are returned to the submitting department or agency, and may be resubmitted with additional documentation or when the applicant's qualifications change. For applications that are approved by the authorized accrediting agency, the following steps are taken:

- The applicant's department or agency is notified.
- A record is created on the individual in the official credentialing database.
- An identification card or other credential is issued to the individual. (The identification card or credential should include an expiration date and be reissued as appropriate.)
- Information on the applicant is uploaded to the incident management infrastructure.

While credentialing includes the issuing of identification cards or credentials, it is separate and distinct from the incident badging process. When access to a site is controlled through special badging, the badging process must be based on verification of identity, qualifications, and deployment authorization.

Organizations utilizing volunteers, especially spontaneous volunteers, are responsible for ensuring each volunteer's eligibility to participate in a response. These organizations—governmental agencies responsible for coordinating emergency responses, volunteer management agencies (e.g., Red Cross, Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals, Medical Reserve Corps, etc.), and other

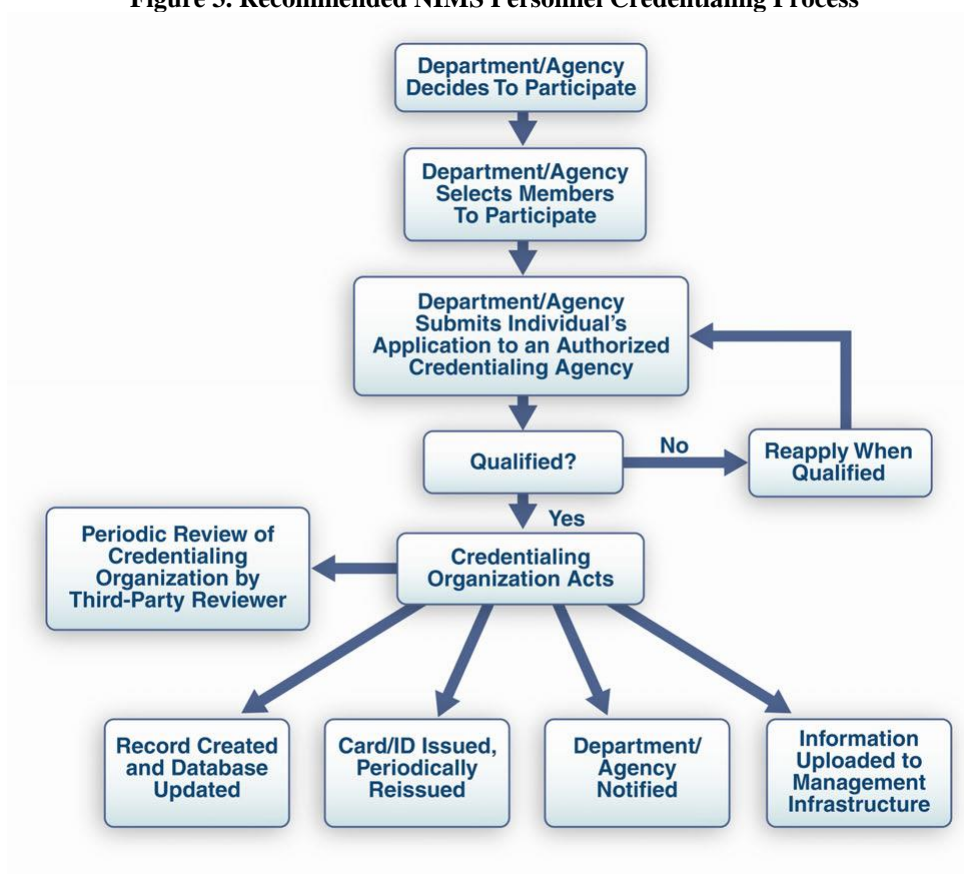


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Appendix: NIMS Credentialing

potential users of volunteers (e.g., hospitals, fire and police departments, etc.)—must develop protocols governing the activation and use of volunteers. Careful coordination is required to ensure the provision of services is not hindered by unaddressed safety and security considerations or legal or regulatory issues.

Figure 3. Recommended NIMS Personnel Credentialing Process





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Appendix: NIMS Credentialing

Approvals:

This document is, by the signatures below, accepted. All prior documents related to the subjects covered herein are null and void.

Wisconsin ARES/RACES Section
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